Water Conservation Tips

Bathroom

Time your shower to keep it under 5 minutes. You'll save up to 800 gallons a month.

When shaving, fill the sink basin with hot water instead of letting the water run continuously.

Plug the bathtub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.

When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.

Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save 4 gallons a minute. That's 200 gallons a week for a family of four.

Turn the water off while you shampoo and condition your hair and you can save more than 50 gallons a week.

Never use the toilet to dispose of cleansing tissues, cigarette butts, or other trash. This wastes water and also places an unnecessary load on the sewage treatment plant or septic tank.

If your toilet was installed prior to 1980, place a toilet dam or bottle filled with water or stones in your toilet tank (away from operating parts) to cut down on the amount of water used for each flush.

If your shower can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace it with a water-efficient, low-flow showerhead. They're inexpensive, easy to install, and can save over 500 gallons a week.

Install low-volume toilets that use only 1.6 gallons per flush.

Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and you can save more than 600 gallons a month.

Kitchen

Soak your pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.

Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost instead and save gallons every time.

Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks.

Wash your produce in a sink or pan partially filled with water instead of running tap water.

Designate one glass for your drinking water each day. This will cut down on the number of times you run your dishwasher.

Don't use running water to thaw food.

Cook food in as little water as possible. This will also retain more of the nutrients.

If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.

Washers - laundry and dish

Running your washing machine and dishwasher only when full could save 600 gallons/month.

When doing laundry, match the water level to the size of the load.

Choose new water-saving appliances, like washing machines that offer cycle and load size adjustments. They are also more energy-efficient than older appliances.

Cut back on rinsing if your dishwasher is new. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.

Outdoors

Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk.

When washing the car, use a bucket of soapy water and turn on the hose only for rinsing.

We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.

Use porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff.

Yardwork

Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades roots and holds soil moisture better than a short-clipped lawn.

For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.

Remember to weed your lawn and garden regularly. Weeds compete with other plants for nutrients, light, and water.

While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer needed.

Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on top of the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.

Start a compost pile. Using compost when you plant adds water-holding organic matter to the soil.

More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering. Be sure only to water plants when necessary.

Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter.

Use sprinklers that throw big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller drops of water and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground.

Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower.

Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting native shrubs, ground cover, etc. Native plants also require less maintenance and water. (Contact Linda Sekura for a list of native and drought-resistant plants - X 3-5693.)

Direct downspouts and other runoff towards shrubs and trees (check your city codes first), or collect and use for your garden. (Contact Aaron Walker about installing a Raingarden - X 3-8764.)

Pets

Bathe your pets outdoors in an area in need of water.

When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.

Travel

While staying in a hotel or even at home, consider reusing your towels and sheets. Leave the housekeeper a note if your hotel does not give you the option.

When you have ice left in your cup from a take-out restaurant, don't throw it in the trash, dump it on a plant.

General

Teach your children to turn the faucets off tightly after each use.

Use cold water as often as possible to save energy and to conserve the hot water for uses that cold water cannot serve. (This is also better for clothing made of today's synthetic fabrics.)

Make sure there are aerators on all of your faucets.

Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive, and can save 140 gallons a week.

Make sure you know where your master water shut-off valve is located. This could save gallons of water and damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.

Insulate all hot water pipes to reduce the delays (and wasted water) experienced while waiting for the water to "run hot."

Always keep water conservation in mind, and think of other ways to save. Small savings from not making too much coffee or letting ice cubes melt in a sink can add up in a year's time.